

I want to hear from President Clinton as to why this region is of a national security interest to the United States and why he should risk the lives of our young troops by sending them to Kosovo.

And where is the European community in all of this? It seems as though we are risking the lives of our soldiers to clean up Europe's backyard. If anyone should take the lead on this intervention, it should definitely be from a European nation. This is Europe's problem, if anyone's, and not ours. Kosovo is not in our backyard.

An American soldier's job is to protect America's interests by destroying America's enemies on the battlefield. It is an insult to ask an American soldier to serve as a policeman under the umbrella of some international organization instead of the American flag.

There are many questions that President Clinton and his administration need to answer, and we are being left in the dark once again.

President Clinton, take these questions seriously.

When and how many troops are we deploying and how long will they be there?

What is their mission?

Will there be more troops deployed if our goals and missions are not met?

Will foreign commanders be commanding our troops under this NATO force?

What are the rules of engagement?

How will this mission be paid for, and will valuable dollars be pulled away from military readiness accounts to pay for this deployment?

What, if any, is our exit strategy?

As you have heard, President Clinton, I have many questions and I am not alone. You gave us no details and answers with regard to the Bosnia mission, and I fear we, as well, will be given very little, if any, details regarding our involvement in Kosovo.

But quite frankly, not getting answers from President Clinton does not surprise me.

I do not believe we have a compelling national interest to send troops to Kosovo. If they are sent, we all deserve answers from President Clinton before our troops are sent into another mess for years to come.

Our men and women in uniform are ready and willing to defend the interests of this great Nation, but not the interests of other nations. We cannot undermine the oaths they take when they are sworn into the military to serve this great Nation.

President Clinton, do your job, and let us know what is happening with Kosovo.

God bless our troops.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 11:45, under the same terms as previously granted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGETS

Mr. THOMAS. I wanted to take an opportunity in morning business, Mr. President, to comment just a little bit on this whole business of budgeting; I guess more specifically, supplemental budgets and the problems that are there.

First of all, with respect to the budget that is before the Senate, I congratulate the leadership and the Appropriations Committee for the good work that they have done. I know that it is difficult. I think they have done a good job in seeking to offset the costs.

But I really believe that one of the things we need to change in the Senate is our method of budgeting, our method of supplemental budgeting particularly. First of all, in the broader sense, I am hopeful that we will consider this year the idea of a biennial budget, that we will come in at the beginning of the 2-year period, put down a budget, and have 2 years under which to operate so that in the second year we can do more of what we should be doing, and that is oversight of the expenditures of that budget.

I understand that under that circumstance there would be supplemental budgets, that you would probably be more likely to have one if you had the 2-year budget, but I think that is the thing we ought to be doing. Now we spend such a high percentage of our total time doing budgetary things and quite often bringing in things that are nonbudgetary on to budget bills. I think that is a mistake.

We are set up to have a Budget Committee. We are set up to have an Appropriations Committee that deals with the expenditures. We are set up to have committees of jurisdiction that are responsible for the policy. Unfortunately, many times we find that issues on policy come to the appropriations, particularly on supplementals, without ever going to the committee of jurisdiction, and we find ourselves with policy on Appropriations Committee measures, which I think is inappropriate.

There again let me say, I congratulate those who have been involved with this bill, because I think they have done a good job—something around \$2 billion, I believe, that has been generally offset. And I know how difficult it is to keep the amendments from

coming. Everybody sees that as an opportunity to put on there the things they have been seeking to do.

We talk about having surpluses; we talk about what we are going to do with those surpluses. The real issue before us, particularly if you are interested in keeping the size of the Federal Government under control, is spending and spending caps.

I am pretty proud of what has happened here in the Senate, in the Congress, over the last several years, when we have been able to have some spending caps, and we have been able to at least hold spending at a relatively level. Yet we have a surplus, and we begin to think, "Oh, we can do this." If you really want to keep control over the size of the Federal Government, if you really want to encourage governance to take place more at the State and local level, then we have to be very observant, I think, of spending caps.

There is a justification for emergency spending, certainly, when we have things like storms and earthquakes and so on, but emergency spending can also result in all kinds of things being called "emergency spending," and the result is we spend more than our caps.

So I think most people in Wyoming believe that \$1.6 trillion is plenty of money. That is what our spending is. In the natural event, we spent last year about \$20 billion in emergency spending, much of which would be very hard to really honestly identify as emergency spending. It was an "emergency" way to have more spending, encouraged by the administration, encouraged by this President. And his budget is going to cause us to consider that even more, where the President has cut down spending that needs to go on, to put in new spending in the hopes that the total spending will be increased.

So, Mr. President, I just think that is the wrong way to go. I do, again, appreciate our chairman trying to hold and offset spending. I voted against the supplemental bill last year even though obviously there are always things there that you would like to have happen.

I think we need to look very closely at this bill to make sure that spending is in fact offset or that it is indeed emergency spending.

Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to share some general feelings about our budgeting system and to urge that we take a very close look at what we do in terms of our total spending and how it has been impacted by these kinds of supplemental budgets.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The distinguished Senator from Alaska is recognized.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 121 THROUGH 123, EN BLOC

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I send to the desk an amendment for Senator SESSIONS that deals with the Crop Loss Assistance Program. Senator SESSIONS' amendment is offered as one of Senator COCHRAN's relevant amendments in the agricultural area.

I also send to the desk an amendment on behalf of Senator COVERDELL making funds available for a scholarship fund in Honduras. Senator COVERDELL's amendment is offered as one of my relevant amendments on the list.

Finally, I send to the desk an amendment for Senator DASCHLE dealing with 801 housing at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

I ask unanimous consent that these amendments be considered en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS] proposes amendments numbered 121 through 123.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 121

(Purpose: To improve the crop loss assistance program)

On page 7, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

GENERAL PROVISION, THIS CHAPTER

SEC. . CROP LOSS ASSISTANCE.—(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1102 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (section 101(a) of division A of Public Law 105-277), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “(not later than June 15, 1999)” after “made available”; and

(2) in subsection (g)(1), by inserting “or private crop insurance (including a rain and hail policy)” before the period at the end.

(b) DESIGNATION AS EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—Such sums as are necessary to carry out the amendments made by subsection (a): *Provided*, That such amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement for the purposes of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, is transmitted by the President to Congress: *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement under section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise to speak regarding my amendment to improve the crop loss assistance program. I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to Chairman STEVENS, Senator COCHRAN, Senator

LUGAR, and Senator KOHL for their assistance in gaining an agreement on this amendment.

I believe this amendment will help provide much needed assistance to our Nation's farmers. In the fiscal year 1999 omnibus appropriations bill we provided emergency funds to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to aid farmers who have suffered losses due to natural disasters in recent years. I believe the regulations that were promulgated by the USDA were inadequate to address the needs of many of our farmers.

Under the multi-year disaster assistance provisions contained in the fiscal year 1999 omnibus appropriations bill, farmers who experienced losses in three of the last five crop years (1994-1998) or 1998 alone were eligible for 25 percent of indemnities paid. Farmers would be paid the higher of the multi-year or single year loss but would not qualify under both.

Many farmers in parts of Alabama experienced losses in two out of five years, or experienced devastating losses in years other than 1998 and so were ineligible for the disaster assistance. In addition, many producers experienced losses but did not meet the eligibility requirement since they may have had up to 35-percent losses but no insurance indemnity was paid that crop year.

Farmers may have also experienced a loss with a private crop policy such as rain and hail but did not have enough of a loss to trigger the indemnity. This amendment would require that USDA count indemnity losses by private policies such as rain and hail that were paid during the crop years 1994-1998 to be counted as a loss, under the three out of five year crop loss requirement.

In determining eligibility for the multi-year provisions, the Risk Management Agency, RMA, simply generated a list of producers by taxpayer ID and if their production records showed a loss for either 1998 or three out of the five preceding crop years, RMA determined they were eligible. However, since these private crop policies are not offered under the Multi-Peril Crop Insurance program, MPCI, and purely a private contract between the insured producer and insurance company, RMA did not count these losses as qualifying under the multi-year provisions.

This amendment will simply provide equity for producers who might have experienced losses under their private policies such as rain and hail, but did not experience losses under the catastrophic or “buyup” policies. I believe this amendment will provide essential flexibility in the program so that farmers who have endured severe conditions in recent years can qualify for the assistance we provided in the omnibus bill last year.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter from me to Secretary Glickman be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 25, 1999.

Mr. DAN GLICKMAN,
Secretary, Department of Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY GLICKMAN: I am writing regarding some concerns I have about the Crop Loss Disaster Assistance Program that was authorized by the Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1999.

I am concerned about the regulations that have been formulated by the USDA with regards to this program. Congress provided these funds to aid farmers that have faced extreme conditions during the past few years. Having been contacted by several of my constituents, it has come to my attention that the program is not adequate in addressing many farmers needs. Although numerous farmers suffered significant losses in 1998, many still will not qualify for assistance under the provisions specifically designed to address 1998 losses due to disasters. Furthermore, the provisions relating to multi-year losses precludes many farmers from receiving the assistance they so desperately need, even when they had two devastating years. While I understand that these types of programs must have limits, I request that you investigate this disparity to determine if a possible solution is available.

I am also concerned about the disproportionate impact that the program will have on different geographic areas. While I am aware that different areas face distinct weather problems, I have some concerns that certain areas of the U.S. are going to receive a much larger portion of the assistance funds than other areas. I believe this could be due to the way the regulations were formulated. Again, I request that you investigate this inequity to determine if we are implementing the best system possible.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I know we share the common goal of aiding the American farmer in the fairest and most equitable way possible. I would appreciate your contacting me or my office with any findings. If you have any questions or require more information, please feel free to contact John Little, my legislative counsel for this issue.

Very truly yours,

JEFF SESSIONS,
United States Senator.

AMENDMENT NO. 122

(Purpose: To make available funds for a scholarship fund for Zamorano Agricultural University in Honduras)

On page 8, line 21, by inserting after “Honduras:” the following: “*Provided further*, That, of the amount appropriated under this heading, up to \$10,000,000 may be made available to establish and support a scholarship fund for qualified low-to-middle income students to attend Zamorano Agricultural University in Honduras:”

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Alaska for his leadership on this very important supplemental appropriations bill. It goes without saying that these funds are much needed both in our country and in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean affected by Hurricane Mitch. The funds will go to some of the neediest people in this hemisphere and will address immediate and long-term needs. I have traveled the region personally in the wake of this disaster, and I know that these resources